

Mississippi Arts Commission – Operating Grants Fiscal Year 2015 Program Guidelines

Next application deadline: Monday, March 3, 2014

Two-Year Operating Grantees Request for Second Year Funding: also due March 3, 2014.

Operating Grant Applications must be submitted through the eGRANT system. No mailed applications will be accepted.

Please submit Operating Grant applications no earlier than 30 days prior to the March 3rd deadline. Applications received prior to this date will be returned.

Required additional information: All organizations applying to MAC (including schools) must provide their Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number on the application. [Go to Dun & Bradstreet](#) to apply for a number or check to see if your organization has a number. [Go here for more information on DUNS numbers](#) and how to apply for one.

Overview

The Operating Grant program helps support the ongoing work of Mississippi's established non-profit arts and cultural organizations. These organizations are crucial partners with MAC in providing access to the arts for the state's residents. Operating Grants help them to maintain and expand their programs and services.

Operating Grants can be used by organizations to support any of their general operating expenses, including salaries, marketing, rent, insurance, or artistic fees. See the [“General Information on the Grants Process”](#) page on the MAC website for the types of activities that cannot be funded by the grant. Because of the wide range of expenses the grant can support, Operating Grant applicants are required to submit more detailed information than other applicants. The additional information allows MAC's grant review panels to get a more detailed picture of the applicant organization's overall structure and activities.

MAC awards Operating Grants in each of its four programs areas. Before applying, review the goals of each program area to determine which one most closely aligns with your organization's mission and activities.

Eligible organizations are limited to applying for a Project Grant OR an Operating Grant each fiscal year. First-time applicants to the Operating Grant Program are strongly encouraged to contact MAC program staff about the viability of this type of grant for their organization before submitting an application.

Who May Apply

A Mississippi-based arts organization may apply for an Operating Grant if it has been incorporated in the state of Mississippi as a nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status under section 501(c)3 of the IRS code for at least two years and:

- Has a mission and ongoing activities that are focused on arts development and presents performances, exhibitions, arts education programs, or other arts services to the public as its primary function;
- Has a governing board empowered to form policies and execute programs;
- Demonstrates a close working relationship with local government agencies, artists, schools, and community organizations;
- Has a board-adopted, basic long-range plan that shows how the organization intends to grow artistically, manage for the future, and serve the community;
- Reflects the demographics of its community in the planning, implementation and evaluation of its programs;
- Demonstrates ongoing fiscal responsibility by maintaining financial records that meet generally accepted accounting principles;
- Is not receiving operating funds from another line of the Mississippi state government's budget; and
- Is not primarily educational and does not award academic credit.

Local arts agencies applying to the Community and Economic Development program for an Operating Grant must provide at least two of the following services:

- Arts-based community development programs for local residents;
- Re-granting and services to local artists or arts organizations;
- Serves as a source of information on local cultural events, activities, and programs;
- Facility management (such as a gallery or performance center) services;
- Arts education;
- Advocacy for the arts;
- Arts presenting; or
- Arts instruction.

A note to Community and Economic Development organizations: MAC traditionally awards Operating Grants to one local arts agency from any given municipality. When two local arts agencies serving the same geographic area apply for Operating Grants in the same year, both of the organizations' applications should directly address how the work of the two groups complement (and does not replicate) each other. As with any other application in this program, each applicant must demonstrate that they involve the entire community in their planning, governance, programming, and evaluation.

Major divisions of nonprofit organizations that are engaged solely in arts activities and meet the above requirements are also eligible to apply. However, branches or divisions within eligible arts organizations may not apply. An arts division within a larger organization must provide a budget that is clearly delineated within the overall financial statement of the organization.

Statewide Arts Service Organizations

Statewide arts service organizations that have missions compatible with one of MAC's four program areas may apply for up to \$15,000 through the Operating Grant program. The organization may be staffed or volunteer. MAC defines a statewide arts service organization as a nonprofit group that:

- Advocates to policy makers and citizens the benefits of a specific arts discipline or application of the arts, such as dance, theater, arts-based community projects, or arts in education;
- Serves a defined segment of the arts community;
- Provides services or programs to the general public, not just its members;
- Creates technical assistance or networking opportunities for professionals within a specific discipline; and
- Has a governing board that represents the state's geographic and cultural diversity.

Two-Year Operating Grants

MAC allows veteran Operating grantees to apply for two-year Operating Grants. Organizations who are awarded two-year support do not submit an application prior to the second year of their grant. However, they are required to submit final reports both years, as well as a "Request for Second Year Funding" form at the start of the second year's grant.

Organizations may apply for two-year support after successfully completing a one-year MAC Operating Grant. Applicants must be recommended for two-year funding by the grant review panel that evaluates their application. This recommendation then must be approved by MAC's Commissioners.

Two-year Operating Grant funds are given on a year-to-year basis. The grantee is not guaranteed to receive the same amount of funding both years of the grant. All grant amounts are subject to change based on MAC's annual budget.

Award Amounts

Operating Grants require a dollar-for-dollar cash match (whatever your organization is requesting must be matched with existing funds or anticipated income). The amount an organization is eligible to apply for is based on its previous year's total income:

- If you are a volunteer-run organization, you may apply for 25% of your last completed fiscal year's income, not to exceed \$7,500.
- If you are a staffed organization* with an annual budget of at least \$30,000, you may apply for 25% of the last completed fiscal year's income, not to exceed \$20,000.
- If you are a staffed organization* with an annual budget of more than \$250,000, you may apply for up to 10% of the actual cash revenue for operating expenses of the last completed fiscal year, not to exceed \$30,000. (Revenues do not include loans, endowment funds, capital improvement funds, or any other restricted-use funds that are not part of general operating revenues.)

*To apply as a staffed agency, your organization must have at least one full-time, year-round paid professional staff person working solely for your organization at the time the application is submitted. MAC considers "full-time" status as a minimum of 35 hours of work per week. The agency expects that the staff person(s) are paid at the prevailing professional wage for their area.

Long-Range Strategic Plan

An organization's ability to develop an effective long-range plan and utilize it to track its performance over time is crucial to achieving long-term success. Therefore, a long-range plan (that covers three to five upcoming years) is a required component of MAC's Operating Grant application.

MAC's grant review panelists evaluate each applicant organization's long-range plan in order to get a picture of where it sees itself going in the coming years. Panelists also review the narrative attachment, which describes the organization's objectives for the coming grant period and outlines the strategies the applicant will use to move it toward those goals.

For guidance on developing a long-range plan for your organization, visit the ["Key Components of a Long-Range Strategic Plan"](#) page on the MAC website.

Review Criteria

Operating Grant applications are reviewed using the following criteria:

1. Goals and Outcomes (20 points)

- The organization's mission and goals are in alignment with their strategic plan
- The organization's goals are aligned with the goals of the MAC grant program under which they are applying
- They have articulated outcomes needed to meet their goals
- Activities are in place to meet expected outcomes

2. Quality of Project Activities and Artistic Excellence (30 points)

- A description of activities for the next grant period (7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015) is provided
- Information on the artists, arts professionals and their qualifications are included
- The time and location of the activities are provided

3. Public Participation and Access (30 points)

- Those planning and participating in the organization's activities are described
- The planners and participants reflect the community demographic or the organization explains how they are working towards that goal
- Board members reflects the community and contribute (in some way) to the organization
- The organization works to make its programs inclusive

4. Ability to Achieve Goals and Evaluate Success (20 points)

- The staff or project leaders are described, including their qualifications
- The organization receives support from the community
- Partnerships with other organizations are adequately described
- Proper financial controls are in place
- Information on promotions and evaluation processes are included

How to Apply

Please submit the following items as part of the eGRANT application process. The supplementary binder will still be sent in via postal mail. All other items should be submitted within eGRANT:

- Operating Grant Application Form
- Narrative (three-page maximum) in which you provide a brief overview of your organization (the "Organizational Picture"), a review of your strategic plan process, and an explanation of how your organization will meet the program's review criteria.
- Budget Itemization that explains in greater detail the income and expenses listed in the budget section of the application. Please also provide an explanation for any budgetary changes of more than 20% over the previous year.
- Your organization's current long-range strategic plan. If your organization's strategic plan has ended and the process has not begun for the new plan, please include the current plan, along with a proposal for planning the next long-range strategic plan process.
- A list of the activities your organization produced during the current year and those planned for the upcoming year. This can include performances, classes, workshops, exhibitions, or other programming. Include in the list a brief description for each activity and its frequency (one-time event, weekly, monthly).
- A list of your board of directors indicating ethnic make-up and members with disabilities.
- Current biographies (one half page maximum for each) of key artistic and administrative personnel, both paid and volunteer. Do not substitute bios with resumés.
- Letters from other organizations that detail their collaboration with you on key programs (if applicable). Support letters that do not detail collaborative work should be submitted in the supplemental binder.
- The review or audit of your organization's most recently completed fiscal year. Refer to the Audit Requirements section below to determine what type of document to submit.
- Your organization's re-granting guidelines, if applicable. Please include with your guidelines a list of funded projects from the past two years identifying recipient names, project titles and award amounts.
- If your organization is applying to MAC for the first time: a copy of your official IRS 501(c)3 determination letter. You do not need to send a copy of the letter if your organization has applied for a grant from MAC in the past three years. If you are unsure whether or not your organization has applied recently, please call and check with MAC program staff before submitting an application.

Applications should be complete, including all required information and materials. Incomplete applications, defined as applications missing one or more of the above-listed documents, will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

Supplementary Materials

Please submit supplementary materials relating to your proposed project activities that will help panelists better understand the work of your organization. These may include:

- A copy of sample programs, brochures, educational materials, or other promotional materials from your organization;
- News clippings that relate to recent activities, and
- No more than five letters of collaborative support.

Please submit the supplementary materials in a three-ring binder with your organization's name on the cover to expedite panel review. Be selective. The binder should not exceed 25 pages of material and the items included should be no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches.

Audit Requirements

Applicants who received less than \$25,000 from MAC in the previous fiscal year must submit basic financial statements, including a standard income statement and balance sheet, prepared according to generally accepted accounting principles and signed by the fiscal agent.

Applicants who received \$25,000 or more from MAC during the previous fiscal year are required to submit a review of financial statements, prepared according to generally accepted accounting principles. (Previously a certified audit of financial statements was required).

Applicants who receive \$500,000 or more in combined federal funds in one fiscal year must submit an audit that meets the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget as described in OMB Circular A-133, available from OMB's website.

Return of Supplementary Materials

Please notate on your binder whether or not you would like it returned. Applicants who want their materials returned by mail must send a self-addressed mailer with sufficient postage attached to it. Binders may also be picked up July 1st through 31st at MAC's office during regular business hours. Please make arrangements with the program director managing your application before visiting MAC's office. All support materials will be discarded after July 31st if no instructions are given for their return.

Application Calendar

March 3, 2014 – Operating Grant application deadline

April 2014 – Review of applications by the grant panel (specific panel dates will be available by mid-March. Grant applicants are allowed to attend panels. Contact program staff for the date your application will be reviewed.)

June 2014 – MAC Board meets and makes final funding decisions on all applications

July 1, 2014 – Applicants are notified whether their application was funded or not. No information on the grants (including whether or not an organization will be receiving an award or the amount of the award) will be available from MAC prior to this date.

Staff Contacts

For more information on applying for an Operating Grant, contact the MAC program director who oversees the area most closely tied to your organization's main goals:

Arts in Education - Kim Whitt, (601) 359-6037 / kwhitt@arts.ms.gov

Arts Industry - Diane Williams, (601) 359-6529 / dwilliams@arts.ms.gov

Community and Economic Development - Allison Winstead, (601) 359-6546 / awinstead@arts.ms.gov

Folk & Traditional Arts - TBD, call (601) 359-6030 with questions in this area